

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Applicants have amended claims 8 and 9 to overcome the rejections raised by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. §112. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully solicited.

Claims 1-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over German Patent (DE 199 59 919) in view of the German Book Reference identified as the first reference under "Other Documents" in the Information Disclosure Statement submitted April 23, 2004, and also described on page 2 of the present Specification.

The Examiner refers to Fig. 1 in the DE '919 patent which shows a pneumatic spring pot comprising a pot wall, a bottom connected to the pot wall and a first annular flange opposite said bottom and connected to said wall, wherein the pot wall, the bottom and the first annular flange are formed in one piece, and the first annular flange has a diameter smaller than the diameter of the pot wall. However, contrary to the opinion of the Examiner, the pneumatic spring pot disclosed in DE '919 does not have a second annular flange at the bottom. The second annular flange in the bottom of the pneumatic spring pot according to the present invention defines an opening in the bottom and has the function of receiving the damper bearing and, as a result of this, absorbing damper forces (see page 2, first paragraph of the specification of the present application). The bottom of the pneumatic spring pot as shown in Fig. 1 in the DE '919 patent, however, which is the part nearest to the element 12, is closed and does not have an opening. Fig. 1 in the DE '919 patent merely shows that the transition region from the pot wall 3 to the bottom is configured in cone-shaped fashion. Thus, the pneumatic spring pot

according to the DE '919 patent comprises only one annular flange opposite to the bottom.

Furthermore, the DE '919 patent does not disclose that the bottom, the pot wall and the annular flange are formed from a sheet metal by sheet metal forming from a sheet bar, in such a way that the first annular flange is formed from an outer region of the sheet bar. The DE'919 patent is silent regarding the process by which the pneumatic spring pot is produced, as well as the material from which the pneumatic spring pot is manufactured.

In addition, claims 1 and 6 of the present application not only require that the pot wall and the first annular flange are formed in one piece from a sheet metal by sheet metal forming from a sheet bar, but also that the annular flange is formed from an outer edge region of said sheet bar. The inventive effect of this type of sheet metal forming of the sheet bar to form the pneumatic spring pot brings about a material consolidation in the outer edge region of the sheet bar and consequently, in the finished pneumatic spring pot, in the region of the first annular flange that serves for the fastening of, for example, the pneumatic spring concertina. This material consolidation is a consequence of the fact that the outer edge region of the sheet bar is subjected to the most forming operations up to the finished forming of the first annular flange (see page 6, last sentence to page 7, second sentence of the present description).

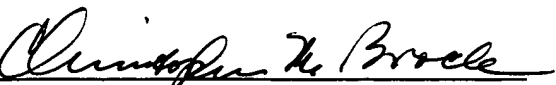
As noted above, the DE '919 patent does not disclose the process by which the pneumatic spring pot is manufactured and therefore does not teach or fairly suggest to produce the pneumatic spring pot as required in claims 1 and 6 of the present application.

The German book reference described on page 2 of the present specification does not obviate these deficiencies in the DE '919 reference. The German book reference ("Fahrwerktechnik: Stoß- und Schwingungsdämpfer") discloses a pneumatic spring pot having a bottom, a pot wall and an annular flange for fastening a pneumatic spring concertina, wherein the bottom, the pot wall and the annular flange are formed in one piece from sheet metal. The bottom of this pneumatic spring pot has an orifice through which a piston rod extends, and wherein the damper bearing or head bearing is arranged as a separate structural part of the bottom (see the figure on page 229 in the German book reference). There is therefore no integration of the head bearing housing or damper bearing housing into the pneumatic spring pot, this leading to a generally complicated overall form of construction of the pneumatic spring system (cf. page 3, first paragraph of the present specification). In other words, the German book reference does not disclose a second annular flange that is integrally formed on the bottom as defined in independent claims 1 and 6.

Accordingly, claims 1 and 6, as well as those claims dependent thereon, are believed to present patentable subject matter and are therefore believed to be in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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